
DEATHS DUE TO FIREARMS: 2003

The Medical Examiner is responsible for investigating all deaths due to firearms that occur in King County. Medical Examiner data relate primarily to the victim because information regarding the weapon and the shooter is often unknown. The following data are specific to the victims of firearm deaths.

In 2003, there were 155 firearm deaths investigated by the Medical Examiner. In 2002 there were 153 firearm deaths, 128 such deaths both in 2001 and 2000, and 161 in 1999. Of the 155 deaths in 2003, 52 (34%) were homicides and 101 (65%) were suicides. While there were none in 2002, 2001, 2000 and 1999, there was one accidental firearm death in 2003.

In 2003, gunshot wounds were the leading cause of death for homicides and suicides. In 2003 gunshot deaths comprised 56% (52/93) of homicides, compared to 58% (53/92) in 2002, 58% (43/74) in 2001, and 53% (39/73) in 2000. In 2003, suicides by firearms represented 47% (101/217) of suicide deaths compared to 49% (98/200) in 2002, 46% (85/183) in 2001, and 49% (87/178) in 2000.

Of the fifty-two (52) 2003 gunshot homicide victims, 6% (3/52) were 19 years old and younger - a substantial drop from 2002. It is estimated that a disproportionate number of gunshot homicides were Black (23%, 12/52) compared to the percentage of Blacks in the general population. Of the 12 Black gunshot homicide victims, 42% (5/12) were males between 20 and 29 years of age. In comparison, 52% (27/52) of the homicide gunshot victims were White. Of the 27 White homicide victims, 37% (10/27) were males between 20 and 29 years old.

Firearms were also the most common mode of committing suicide (47%, 101/217). Of the 101 gunshot suicide victims, 88% (89/101) were white and 74% (75/101) were males. Six (6%) of the gunshot suicide victims were 19 years old and under. Thirty-one (31%) of the gunshot suicide victims were between the ages of 20 and 39 years of age, 35 (34%) between 40 and 59 years, and 29 (29%) were 60 years and older.

Table 10-1 Firearm Deaths by Manner of Death, Age, and Gender

AGE GROUP/ GENDER	MANNER OF DEATH				SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	A	H	S	U		
13-15 years	0	1	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	1	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
16-19 years	0	2	6	0		8
<i>Male</i>	0	2	4	0	6	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	2	0	2	
20-29 years	0	19	18	1		38
<i>Male</i>	0	18	14	1	33	
<i>Female</i>	0	1	4	0	5	
30-39 years	0	17	13	0		30
<i>Male</i>	0	14	11	0	25	
<i>Female</i>	0	3	2	0	5	
40-49 years	0	6	18	0		24
<i>Male</i>	0	4	11	0	15	
<i>Female</i>	0	2	7	0	9	
50-59 years	1	4	17	0		22
<i>Male</i>	1	3	15	0	19	
<i>Female</i>	0	1	2	0	3	
60-69 years	0	1	9	0		10
<i>Male</i>	0	1	9	0	10	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
70-79 years	0	0	10	0		10
<i>Male</i>	0	0	9	0	9	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	1	0	1	
80-89 years	0	1	8	0		9
<i>Male</i>	0	0	8	0	8	
<i>Female</i>	0	1	0	0	1	
90+	0	0	2	0		2
<i>Male</i>	0	0	2	0	2	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
Unknown	0	1	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	1	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	1	52	101	1		155

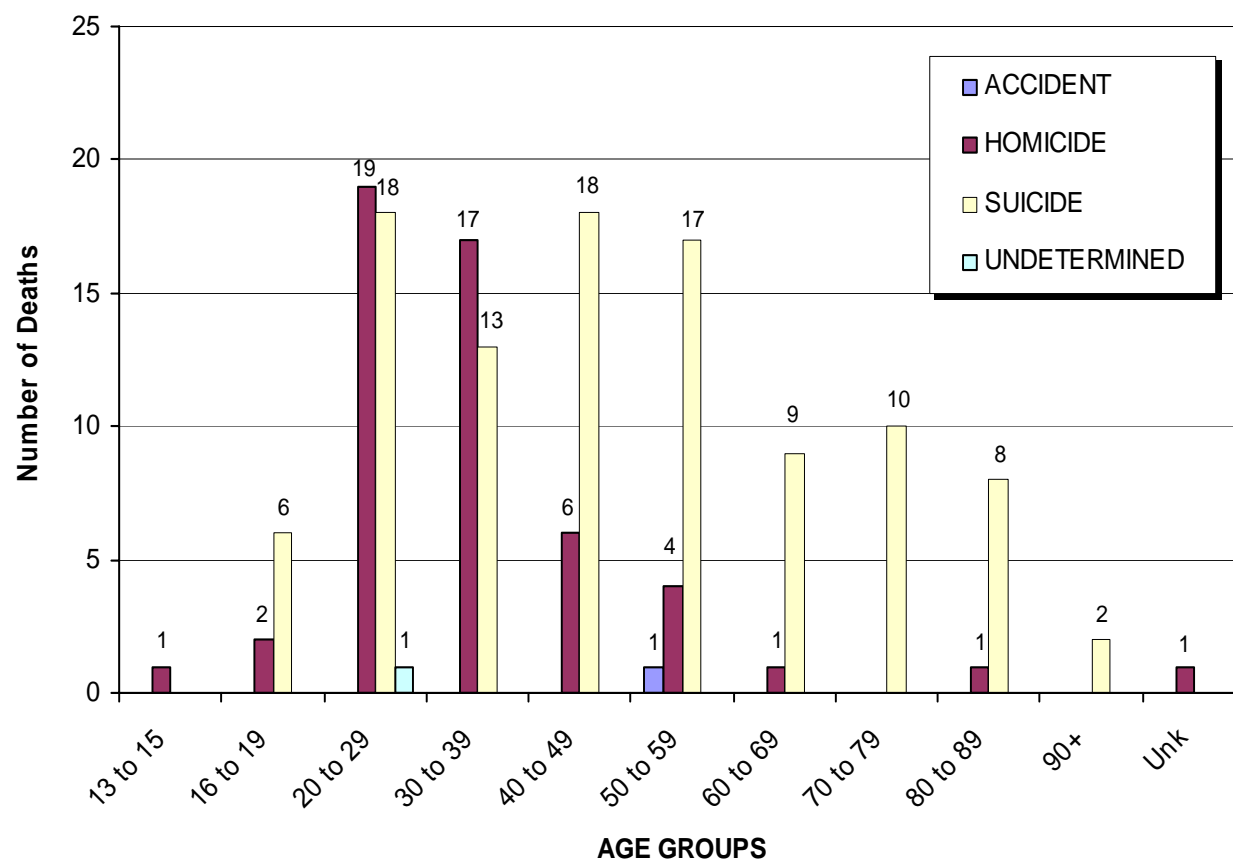
Graph 10-1 Firearm Deaths by Manner of Death and Age

Table 10-2 Firearm Deaths by Manner of Death, Race, and Gender

RACE/ GENDER	MANNER OF DEATH				SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	A	H	S	U		
Asian	0	8	4	0		12
<i>Male</i>	0	7	2	0	9	
<i>Female</i>	0	1	2	0	3	
Black	0	12	6	0		18
<i>Male</i>	0	12	4	0	16	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	2	0	2	
Native American	0	1	1	0		2
<i>Male</i>	0	0	1	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	1	0	0	1	
White	1	27	89	1		118
<i>Male</i>	1	21	75	1	98	
<i>Female</i>	0	6	14	0	20	
Other	0	4	1	0		5
<i>Male</i>	0	4	1	0	5	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	1	52	101	1		155